

Arbitrary Methods of Kings.

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trick is to feign war, obtain supplies, and then make peace under pretext of compassionating his poor subjects, while in reality robbing them. Another, equally lucrative, is the revival of "certain old and moth-eaten laws⁵⁾ which all the world has forgotten, and consequently all the world has broken, and the imposition of a fine for its lack of memory. Another is to forbid many things under heavy penalties, and then sell the privilege of breaking the law to certain individuals for great sums. Still another is to suborn the judges to wrest the law and declare for the king in all suits to his profit, whether he have justice on his side or not, on the understanding " that a king, though he would, can do nothing unjustly/' For is it not, he sarcastically asks, most for the king's advantage that his subjects have very little or nothing in their possession? Doth not poverty sap a man's courage and keep him from rebellion? The whole practice of the art of government on such principles is vicious and detestable. The welfare of the people is the true end of government, for it is ridiculous to assume that a people in choosing a king consulted his interest and not its own. The kingship must stand by its merits, for More, like Fortescue, knows of no other test It has neither dignity nor claim to fealty if it makes a nation poor and wretched. " The commonalty chooseth their king for their own sake, and not for his sake, to the intent that through his labour and study they might all live wealthy, safe from wrongs and injuries, and . . . therefore the king ought to take more care for the wealth of his people than for his own wealth, even as the office and duty of a shepherd is to feed his sheep rather than himself." Otherwise, " he knoweth not the feat how to govern men." The king is not exempt from the obligation of the moral law, from the claims of honour and justice, any more than a private individual. Moreover, power cannot make up for the absence of character. Moral excellence is true dignity, real power. But More knows the world too well to deceive himself with the expectation that his ideal can be put in practice. " In the counsels of kings," reflects he sadly, " these things have no place." Nevertheless, the good citizen must strive to prevent evil as far as he can. He must not forsake the ship in a tempest because he cannot rule and keep down